

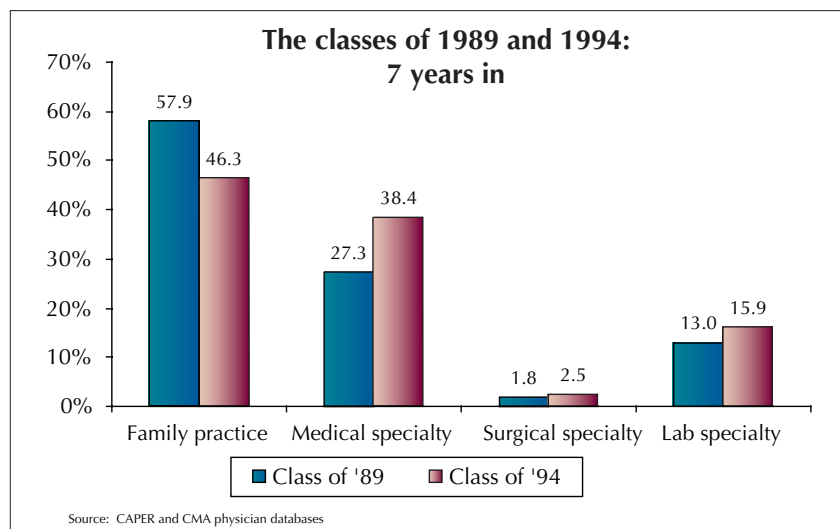
PULSE

Class of '94 results point to family medicine's declining popularity

A study tracking the career paths of graduates from Canada's medical schools has determined that considerably fewer graduates of the Class of '94 (43%) chose careers in family medicine than their counterparts from the Class of '89 (58%). In the ongoing longitudinal study, conducted by the Canadian Post-MD Education Registry (CAPER) and the CMA, new data has been compared with results from earlier research (*CMAJ* 1998; 158[6]:723-8).

More than three-quarters (76%) of the 1994 graduates were in active practice in Canada by 2001, while 11% were in active practice abroad. Another 10% were still training in Canada and 1% were training abroad. The 2 classes had identical results concerning the proportion of physicians practising in Canada 7 years after graduation (76%), but fewer members of the Class '89 were practising abroad (8%). However, more of them were training abroad (3%).

Another notable difference is that a



smaller proportion of the 1994 class took a break in training (4% vs. 13%) and fewer made career changes during training (9% vs. 18%). The study notes that full certification had become a licensure requirement nationally by 1994, so residents could no longer work as physicians before all the train-

ing and examinations required for certification had been completed. In 1989, a 1-year internship that did not require certification by the Royal College or College of Family Physicians of Canada was still available. — *Lynda Buske*, Associate Director of Research, CMA

UK physician loses licence over allegations of trade in human organs

A British physician has lost his licence to practise after the country's main regulatory body ruled that he had encouraged or participated in the trade of human organs.

Dr. Bhagat Singh Makkar was removed from the Medical Register after a disciplinary panel of the General Medical Council (GMC) decided that the 62-year-old former GP was guilty of professional misconduct. Although he has retired after 27 years in practice, Makkar could have worked in the private sector or as a consultant. This avenue will now be closed to him.

Participating in the trade of human organs has been outlawed in the UK since passage of the Human Organ Transplants Act in 1989. The GMC

states: "It is unethical and improper for doctors to take part in any way in the trading of organs or in the transplantation of organs obtained from donors whose consent has been given as a result of any form of undue influence. A doctor who behaves in this way is liable to disciplinary proceedings."

The GMC says a journalist visited Makkar's surgery in March 2001 and claimed to be the son of a man who required a kidney transplant. During the consultation, which was recorded secretly, Makkar indicated that he could arrange for a transplant in the UK or overseas, using a living donor. First, a payment had to be made to both the donor and Makkar. In a subsequent tele-

phone conversation, fees were discussed further and Makkar suggested that the cost would be a lot higher in the UK than in India.

Although no transaction took place, the GMC said "it was apparent from the assured way in which you conducted the consultation that you were aware of the significance and implications of the matters on which you were consulted. You failed to raise the dangers and limitations of kidney transplantation. You also disregarded the health interests of potential donors."

Makkar is the first MD struck from the UK register for this offence. The text of the case is available at www.gmc-uk.org. — *Cathel Kerr*, Fife, Scotland